

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JANUARY 9, 2019
7:00 P.M.
SUFFIELD TOWN HALL
83 MOUNTAIN ROAD, SUFFIELD CT**

Present: Melissa M. Mack, Joanne Sullivan, Tim Reynolds, Mel Chafetz and Pete Hill

Also in attendance: Derek Donnelly – Town Attorney

First Selectman Mack called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and wished all in attendance a Happy New Year. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Minutes from the December 12, 2018 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Hill noted one typographical error on page 4 which included the word “for” twice. The correct sentence should read: *“For instance, either one of them or both of them could run for this position and be elected and serve.”*

Selectman Chafetz expressed his thanks for the amended minutes which included verbatim dialog from the November 7, 2018 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting.

Selectman Chafetz motioned to approve the minutes as noted. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Richard Burrell, 623 Forest Road – *Mr. Burrell requested permission to speak during the discussion of agenda item #5 involving the PILOT Agreement with Town of Southwick.*

Tom Frenaye, 489 Mountain Road – *Mr. Frenaye requested to also speak during the agenda item discussion and asked First Selectman Mack to offer her commentary on the hiring of an outside consultant to perform a study of the Suffield Police Department.*

Approval of 2019 Regular Meeting Calendar

Selectman Hill motioned to approve the 2019 Regular Meeting Calendar. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval of PILOT Agreement with Town of Southwick addressing the Southwick Local Permitting Program assessment on Suffield property owners on the Congamond Lakes

First Selectman Mack explained that the State of Mass allows towns to adopt certain types of

permitting regulations and read the following to the Selectmen:

The Southwick Conservation Commission is in the process of administering the 9th year of the Local Permitting Program (LPP) as authorized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Owners of all registered, having a state registration number, vessels including jet skis docked or moored on Congamond, are required to obtain an annual sticker and affix same to said vessel in accordance with the Local Permitting Program Variance Policy. All docks must be licensed and violators are subject to a fine.

LPP fee also includes: Seasonal docks, floats, moorings, buoy or other small scale-structure accessory to a residential use or that serves as a non-commercial community docking facility.

First Selectman Mack explained that currently the Suffield residents living on the Congamond Lakes are receiving invoices to pay a permitting fee of \$20 or so to the State of Massachusetts, Town of Southwick. This poses the question as to whether the Town of Southwick has the authority to tax our residents.

First Selectman Mack highlighted the following:

- The issue has been argued back and forth for years and money has been spent on lawyers with no actual resolution to the issue.
- Some residents pay the fee and some residents ignore the fee – enforcement of fines is not consistent across the board.
- She asked Southwick how much money the program produces – total dollar amount is insignificant (estimated between \$1,000 - \$3,000 per year)
- Propose the inclusion of a new budget line item for “Public Safety Purposes – Town of Southwick, Massachusetts,” which will be a flat annual fee paid to cover the services provided to Suffield residents on the lakes in lieu of the charge to Suffield residents.
- The Town’s payment will not cover anything that is commercially permitted.
- Services provided by Suffield include but are not limited to serving as harbormaster, assisting the Suffield Parks and Recreation Department with Babb’s Beach and acting as first responders in the event of emergencies on the Congamond Lakes.
- First Selectman Mack has met with officials from the Town of Southwick who are open to the idea.

Town Attorney Derek Donnelly added the following:

- There is no urgency to take immediate action. LPP notices are mailed out in April/May and the reason for the discussion at this time is to get in front of it for the upcoming season.
- The LPP is a very valuable program to Suffield as it provides services including the policing of the lake, emergency responder services and the monitoring of docks for safety compliance.
- Issue has long history dating back to approximately 1720 when Suffield split off from Massachusetts and became a part of Connecticut. The original agreement included verbiage pertaining to the boundaries of the lakes which have moved with the forces of

- nature over the years allowing for differing interpretations of the actual boundaries.
- Possible push-back: Why would the town pick up the cost of something that only benefits those on the lakes?
 - Public Safety
 - Babb's Beach is being revitalized and residents are utilizing the lake each summer.
- The terms of the agreement are being discussed and negotiated at this time.

Selectman Reynolds noted that many Town subsidized programs only benefit a segment of Suffield's population so this would be no different.

Selectman Reynolds motioned to table the PILOT Agreement with Town of Southwick addressing the Southwick Local Permitting Program assessment on Suffield property owners on the Congamond Lakes and discuss at a future meeting when the wording of the Agreement is finalized and a dollar figure has been established. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of road name change

A request has been made by the Town of Southwick, Massachusetts with regard to the renaming of Two States Road, which is partially located in Suffield, CT as well as Southwick, MA.

Attorney Derek Donnelly explained:

As a result of criticism received last year with regard to delays in emergency response times, the Town of Southwick is looking to change the names of a number of streets to improve public safety and avoid confusion with similarly named roads.

- The Town of Southwick has approached the Town of Suffield to see if it would be interested in changing the name of Two States Road.
- No action is required this evening. The discussion is simply to determine the Board of Selectmen's appetite for said request.
- The Town of Southwick has two roads with very similar names which have caused confusion during emergency response situations, resulting in first responders and rescue vehicles going to incorrect locations.
 - 1) Two States Road
 - 2) Two States Avenue.
- Two States Road includes 8 parcels of land with 7 houses located in Suffield, CT.
- Southwick is facing difficulty changing the name of Two States Avenue as there has been large resident opposition. There has been no resident opposition on the Southwick side to a name change on Two States Road.
- The request is being made for the safety of the public.
- Police Chief Brown has been consulted. He understands the concerns and has explained the differences between the systems in Connecticut versus Massachusetts and the possible impact it can have on response times in emergency situations.

First Selectman Mack noted:

- Changing the name of the road may be an enormous inconvenience to the residents.
- Does not want to make a decision which will impact the public safety of the 8 property owners without consulting with them to hear their thoughts on the request.
- Willing to consider the request if the property owners on Two States Road feel the inconvenience of changing their street name is outweighed by the public safety risk.
- Would like to send letters to each homeowner notifying them of the request and soliciting their opinions on the subject prior to giving Southwick a definitive answer.
- Decision to change the name of the road would require a public hearing, taking input from the public, a town meeting and a vote. It is not a simple process.

Discussion and reappointment to the following boards and commissions through December 31, 2022:

- 1) Jen Urbanski and Ed Basile to the Advisory Commission on Capital Expenditures
- 2) Brendan Begley to the Historic District Commission
- 3) Joe Sangiovanni and Kevin Goff to the Permanent Building Commission

Selectman Chafetz motioned to approve the reappointments of Jen Urbanski and Ed Basile to the Advisory Commission on Capital Expenditures through December 31, 2022. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Sullivan motioned to approve the reappointment of Brendan Begley to the Historic District Commission through December 31, 2022. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Chafetz motioned to approve the reappointments of Joe Sangiovanni and Kevin Goff to the Permanent Building Commission through December 31, 2022. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Updates

Town Hall Update

Facilities Manager Chris Matejek, PBC Chair Joe Sangiovanni and First Selectman Mack met with an HVAC company to discuss options for the project that would minimize the disruption to the upper level existing walls. Moving forward, the Public Works Department, PBC Chairman and First Selectman Mack will be reviewing the conceptual plans prepared to date for renovation of the existing Town Hall and the addition in preparation for the issuance of the RFP. They hope to be prepared to discuss with PBC on January 17, 2019.

Highway Garage Update

Austin Street & Hamlet Homes Proposals - No additional information received since last

updates.

Wicks Lumber Site - Developer submitted another conceptual design yesterday after meeting with Mark Cervione to revise the space needs. The Town will get back to him on the changes.

Library Update

Encapsulation is underway. Glenn Neilson, Fuss & O'Neill, AAIC, Chris Matejek and consultant Craig Schoner inspected the first section and authorized the painters to proceed with encapsulation. Once completed, the HVAC system will run for two days and then an air quality test will be taken. If it passes, construction will resume and the library will be put back together. The current estimate, assuming we pass the air quality test, is one month from today to restart the construction process. The KML renovation project has a \$50,000 balance on the plus side at this point based on work completed and up-to-date encumbrances. An opening date is yet to be determined, but is not anticipated to be before April 2019.

Budget 2019-2020

Budget season has begun. The Board of Finance has advised First Selectman Mack to aim for a 2.2% overall (i.e., Cost of Living) increase. It should be noted that Payroll increases are bound by contractual obligations for the Unions. Insurance costs have also increased substantially. Department Heads have been given the directive to keep operating budgets level if possible. Open contracts include: Fire, Police and Dispatch. Town Hall and Library will be re-opening in the new fiscal year.

Town-wide Door Lock Project/Police Camera Upgrades

Technology Director Rebecca Osleger has assumed responsibility for the Town's town-wide door lock project and the police camera upgrades. She is continuing with a solution she implemented recently at the schools, which will result in significant economies of scale. We will have one town-wide universal system of locks with restricted permissions. This will be a tremendous improvement for our public safety departments and will streamline costs. There is already a capital account with enough money to complete the project so we will see this item soon to expand its usage from only the Police Department to all town buildings.

Broad Brook Brewery

The engineered plans are acceptable; a few administrative items to complete this week. Work is likely to resume next week. The town will be reimbursed for money spent on third party engineers who dealt with structural issues.

Management and Operational Study

First Selectman Mack explained that this study should have been done a long time ago; perhaps when Chief Manzi departed. During Superintendent Riello's tenure he made some progress, but

we basically gave our new Chief a department that had cultural issues, lacked training and had a history of poor leadership up to that point. We handed him this department and asked him to take it and move forward. We should have given him more tools; we should have given him this operational study in order to work towards his strategic planning goals. This Management and Operational study is a step to support our Chief in pursuing his goal of taking our police department to be a model of 21st Century Policing.

Selectman Chafetz questioned the process, the involvement of the Police Commission and why it was not made “more public.” Attorney Donnelly assured Selectman Chafetz that First Selectman Mack had consulted with the Police Commission who were fully involved, and satisfied all the appropriate requirements to move forward. This decision falls within the First Selectman’s authority to perform risk management for the Town of Suffield as necessary.

Public Comment

Tom Frenaye, 489 Mountain Road – *“Thank you for the update on the Police Department. Can you tell me if the implementation of the new phone system has been completed?”*

First Selectman Mack - *“Yes it has.”*

Tom Frenaye – *“The Police Department has caller ID now?”*

First Selectman Mack - *“Yes it does. We all have caller ID now.”*

Selectman Reynolds motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 7:48 p.m.

The next regular Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, January 23, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary